/9 cont./

766 the time of other deaths are suppressed, and the eldest maternal uncle takes charge of the burial. Neither the father nor the mother may see the dead child nor assist at the burial, so as to avoid the death of future children.

766 The first-born having died and the burial requirements having been complied with, the mother must submit, if she 881 wishes to prevent the death of her other children, to a special 945 treatment which is practically a repetition of the ceremonies and the regimen to which she was subjected at her initiation on reaching puberty. Apparently it is believed that she did not fully comply on that occasion with the customary rites and prescriptions meant to convert her into an adult woman with all the functions attached to that state. It is to this fault that the Guajiro appears to attribute the death of the first-born.

766 The mother is suspended for three days in a hammock near the ridgepole of the house. She remains there fasting, covered 881 with a cloth so as not to /10/ to be seen. Let down at the end of this interval, she takes some bija /achiote, or seeds of the annatto tree/ as her first food and thin corn mazamorra; a female uterine relative takes care of her, probably more strictly than during her seclusion at puberty, and she stays for five months in an outbuilding adjoining the household or in a room where she cannot be seen except by other women, speaks softly, submits to a nourishing diet, and is deprived of sexual contact with her husband. Also, the process of fattening with the root of hawapi is repeated as well as the use of herbs to delay the reappearance of menstruation. After this seclusion she returns to her husband's side and takes up her marital life.

766 If another child should have the same fate as the first, the usual burial ceremony takes place: a wake is organized, and animals are distributed as in the case of the death of an adult, the animals being supplied by the maternal and paternal grandparents. The tradition norms having been complied with, the dead child is buried in the cemetery of his ancestors. The mother is given special treatment by the professional herbalists,

/10 cont./

766 but seclusion is not repeated, as the death of children is now attributed to diverse causes, some magic and some natural. Once these causes are eliminated, the native believes he has solved the problem.

845 Birth of twins. The reasons the Guajiro cites to explain the birth of twins have a distinct magic character. Although it is not considered as a foreshadowing of lamentable happenings, it is recognized as a heavy burden, especially when the mother has insufficient means or when the number of children is already large. However, there is never any attempt whatever to end the life of twins when they arrive. They rear them in the best way possible following the same customary regimen used for other children and overcoming difficulties as much as possible.

The reasons the Guajiro gives to explain the birth of twins are the following: During the early months of pregnancy, and especially in the first month, the mother has suffered some very intense emotion on being startled by someone or on receiving some unexpected bad news, etc.; or also she may have mocked some other woman who had borne twins, or, worse still, having been able to assist the other woman and having been asked to help as a wet nurse (the mother being unable to feed her young ones), she refused.

853 Feeding and clothing the baby. The newborn child is not fed until three days after birth, when the milk appears in the mother's breasts, an appearance which varies but is generally within the term of three days. However, this custom is frequently not observed even /11/ on the first day due to insinuations of the family or the midwife when the child appears to be extremely hungry.

The child is not suckled at regular intervals, if by this is meant fixed hours which the mother or wet nurse must hold to. The mother feeds the child when he asks by crying or by demanding by word of mouth, according to his age, and also in order to comfort him when he is hurt or in pain, and when she wishes him to go off to sleep. Only a few mestizos, because

/131 cont./

844 wrapped in clothes either specially prepared for the event or improvised. The umbilical cord has already been tied by the midwife, and in the cases of unaided childbirth the mother does this herself, even cutting it with a splinter of wood and tying it as best she can with a vegetable fiber.

184 844 The midwife or the mother takes the afterbirth out of the house and throws it some distance away (a custom of Upper La Guajira) so that it shall be lost. They believe that if they bury it the newborn baby will have bad luck, will sicken and slowly die practically by wasting away. Nevertheless, there are regions, as in Uribia, where the custom prevails of burying it outside the house; in other parts, as in Jarara, the usual way is to put it under a fireplace /fogón/, which is then lit to give strength to the child and ward off infantile sickness.

845 When the delivery shows signs of complications or is abnormally delayed, the male consanguineous relatives in the house are asked to help by lifting up the woman by her armpits during the spasms of labor pains and by this means accelerate the process. Her husband may help at these moments, but at the present time children, youths, and virgins are not allowed to be present, although there are regions, such as Jarara, where the woman gives birth in a passageway or under the enramada /bough-covered shelter/, in full view of everyone, even her small children. There is no concern at all over this matter; childbirth is considered a normal phenomenon and unmarried women may also be present. /132/

[556] Rich and powerful women go to Maracaibo to have their children when their previous births have been difficult, as there they have clinics and doctors at their disposal.

844 Midwives. The midwife is a woman, usually married, who has lived her own professional experiences and has had further experience among her consanguineous relatives. Practice, inborn ability, and empirical knowledge of the phenomenon give these women a certain technique which makes them so famous that their services are greatly in demand. Some of them also know what care and attention the pregnant woman should receive as regards

[58 cont.]

755 associated with some prohibitions of a taboo nature or with established social customs, the origin and in part even significance of which is unknown. But what attracts our attention in this aspect of Guajiro medical [59] practice is preventative rather than curative nature. To demonstrate this, we quote some examples:

753 During the period of pregnancy, neither the father nor the
755 mother should be present at the exhumation of the dead, a cere-
843 mony which the Indians hold to comply with the rites of the secondary burial. If this injunction is disobeyed, the infant about to be born will, at birth or a few days later, have a sickly appearance and will be afflicted with constant diarrhea and night sweats, and will be characterized by a very pronounced paleness and extreme thinness.

755 If this occurs, if through carelessness the parents witness the exhumation of a corpse during the mother's pregnancy and her child is born sickly, they will not try to blame the child's illness on any other cause than that just stated. In accordance with this decision, they will proceed to apply the curing method appropriate for such an emergency, which, as we noted in the previous chapter, "Magic and Sacrifice," is as follows: (a) They wait until there is a fiesta of a ceremonial nature for the exhumation of human remains and then place the infant inside the recently opened body of the animal that has been sacrificed for the ceremony. (b) If the infant cannot be taken to the place where the ceremony is being held, a bone of the sacrificed animal is taken, left to dry, and cooked, and the infant is bathed in this water. (c) If there is no possibility of a ceremony of the type described being held in the near future, a hole is made in the sand, and the child is buried therein up to its neck and is then covered with the loose earth.

843 Neither should the husband of a pregnant woman under any
845 circumstances dig a grave or assist in the construction of a vault
764 (an element of acculturation) destined for the primary or secondary burial of any person. If he does his wife will suffer the consequences of this disrespect in her delivery, which will not be normal: prolonged for several days, very painful, and with serious consequences for the mother and for the coming child.
[177]

[59 cont.]

843 A pregnant woman should never be present at or watch a
845 burial, for if she does so, she will have a difficult childbirth:
the infant's arrival will be delayed in a manner both painful
and difficult for the mother.

755 Anyone who may have touched the corpse of a person
758 whose death has not been natural -- who has been murdered,
764 for example -- is prohibited from approaching the side of one
who is sick, because this individual will die because of his
presence. This prohibition is also extended to those who have
directly assisted in the exhumation of human remains. Further-
more, both of these persons are strictly forbidden to come near
[753] children [60] or places where they may be, because their pres-
ence, contaminated by the nature of the dead, will cause the
children to fall ill.

843 Serpents also have magic influence on pregnant women.
825 In this case it is not an influence destined to injure the unborn
child but is directed against the mother herself, who feels in
various ways in her own flesh the malignant action of the
reptile. For instance, if a woman during her term of pregnancy
sees a hunting snake [culebra cazadora] and remains looking at
it for some time, her child will be born stupid. The explana-
tion that the Indians give for this very generally accepted belief
is that as this snake gives the impression of being stupid, be-
cause it does not attack people as other snakes do and does
them no harm but confines itself to hunting young birds for food,
it transmits this quality to the infant. A mother who encounters
such a reptile should pretend not to have seen it and automati-
cally look elsewhere.

825 If during this same period the mother-to-be should see
843 any kind of snake (other than a hunting snake) she will suffer a
845 miscarriage or some kind of painful mishap related to the de-
livery. To avoid these possible ills, the woman should try to
step over the snake. If in spite of this difficulties in childbirth
occur, then they resort to a curing method which consists in
finding a similar snake, killing it, opening it up carefully, and
localizing in the interior of its intestines the water that it has
drunk, collecting this and taking it to the sick woman, so that
after she has drunk it, her labor will be hastened and will then
occur without any serious complications.

[60 cont.]

825 843 845 If in this same condition the woman sees a serpent under a stone or in a hole, her delivery will be delayed, and it will be difficult and long. As in the case immediately preceding this, prevention depends on the indifference shown by the woman toward the snake: She should immediately look away from the creature. But the coincidence of seeing a snake and its being in a hole or under a stone brings about a new complication, since two elements are involved: first, the snake as such as we have seen in the previous accounts; and second, its apparently difficult position, which is transmitted to the woman in the moment of childbirth in the form of delay in the birth and the physical difficulty of its accomplishment.

Also, the childbirth will be delayed several days and will be extremely painful if during her pregnancy the woman's husband commits the imprudence of killing a snake of any kind.

843 825 [538] [61] The snake then, as we noted at the beginning and as we have been able to confirm by means of the examples submitted, exercises a special magic influence on pregnant women. The position of the snake when seen, either directly by the woman or by the husband, makes this influence greater. We also heard from a story told to us that another belief exists related to the snake and women's pregnancy. We cannot say whether it really exists or if it is the product of imagination and legend because the two elements seem to be mixed up. It concerns a certain serpent that attacks people by jumping at them from a tree and forcing its tail into their ears, and the fact that it only attacks women at a certain period of their pregnancy or a pregnant woman's husband at the same period.

According to the story related to us, during the first three months of pregnancy the woman may be attacked by a very exceptional male serpent with three colors: green, black, and white, placed dorsally in the form of an X. (The female of the species, according to the story, has only one color: green.) The male serpent attacks the wife during the early months of pregnancy, as well as her husband. The creature is usually found hidden in the branches of trees which shade paths and can spring like an arrow from its place of ambush, attacking people with great accuracy. With a spring it settles on its victim's head,

[64 cont.]

192 614 825 In the case of the Uyárayú group, we find another perfect correspondence between the name of the animal and that of the family group:

uyára	= cauquero (a species of deer)
yú	= from wayú Indian, people
uyárayú	= people of the cauquero

614 The foregoing demonstrates the existence within the Guajiro community of the remains of an ancient clan organization, matrilineal and totemic. We say remains because the significance of the totem, as we have noted, has almost completely disappeared, since there does not exist a fixed prohibition against killing certain animals (in this case the animal corresponding to the group) nor any ceremonial ritual related to it. We do not wish to enlarge on this subject of the existence of totems in La Guajira as this will be treated in a later thesis. We only wish to emphasize the value of the serpent in Guajiro 614 magic for which no [65] clearer explanation can be found than 825 the connection it maintains with the ancient beliefs related to 843 the totem. It shows us that the greater percentage of Guajiro totemic clans are connected in their name to this creature; also that the serpent's evil effects fall directly on pregnant women, causing harm not to the children, as occurs with other animals (the fox, sparrow hawk, duck...), but directly to the mother.

* * *

825 The mother-to-be should also avoid seeing a sparrow hawk 843 because if she disobeys this ruling her child will be born bleary eyed, since they say this bird is.

843 A pregnant woman's husband must not go hunting with a modern weapon — the rifle — since he can do this with the tra- 845 ditional weapons, the bow and arrow, for if he does not obey this rule, his wife's labor will be prolonged for a long time, and no remedies nor any other attempts to help her will hasten the birth in any way. When a husband has failed to obey this magico-preventative medicinal norm, it is necessary to obtain a rifle — preferably the one the husband used in his hunting —

[65 cont.]
843 and very carefully wash it [in water]. Giving the woman this
845 water to drink will permit her to deliver the child immediately.

If a Guajiro father has to set off on a long journey on
751 horseback, leaving behind his newborn son, he must comply
854 with another custom of a magic nature, which requires him to
492 wrap the cinch of his horse about the child for a few minutes. If he fails to do this, the child will be very ill and complain pitifully during the time his father is absent. An equivalent form under the same circumstances is the father's customarily placing his foot on the newborn baby's chest for a brief moment. If this obligation is not complied with, either through forgetfulness or all will on the part of the father, the mother, or some close relative of the child, must find the father's old sandals and place them on the child's chest for a few moments in order to obtain the effect desired, which the ritual action if performed by the father would have accomplished.

751 We venture to attempt an explanation of the last two
854 phenomena as follows: The object that is sought in the fulfillment of these two traditional customs is to drive away from the child the presence of the wanurú or the evil spirit of sickness. The pressure exercised by the father's foot or, lacking this, [66] by
[753 the father's old sandals, symbolizes his presence in the child
826] precisely in the place where the spirits in order to attain their evil designs often lodge in the child's body, i.e., its chest, as we shall have occasion to see in the following chapter. This symbolic presence of the father prevents the spirits from approaching near the child to work it harm. Lastly, the custom of wrapping the cinch of [the harness of] the horse on which the father will be traveling around the body of the child is intimately linked
[825] with the belief of these natives that the horse has the power to frighten away the wanurú, or spirit of sickness, with its snorting; more simply this same protection is achieved by placing a horse's skull in a place near the houses. (Cf. "Amulets, Fetishes, Talismans." Also, in this case there is a substitution of the magic formula (using the cinch instead of the horse), a substitution that has exactly similar effects and the action of which could be based on one of the laws of magic established by Sir J. G. Frazer

[88 cont.]

755 the child in the warm sand, covering it to the base of its head. There is a decided magic intervention, the effect of which we 782 do not know on the part of the sacrificed animal which, as we 825 have said, shares the contaminating quality of its dead owner.

Other beliefs which confirm what has been stated are the 843 following: The husband of a pregnant woman should never, for 845 any motive whatsoever, dig a grave or assist in the construction of a vault for either a primary or secondary burial ceremony, because in such a case his wife's delivery will not be normal; it will be prolonged with danger both to the mother and the child.

Neither should the mother-to-be watch a burial being placed in a vault because the previously mentioned phenomenon will be repeated: She will have a difficult delivery, through delay in the birth and pain.

783 Anyone who has touched a man whose death was not due 753 to natural causes must not come near a sick person because if 764 he does the sick man will quickly die. This also applies to those who have helped in an exhumation or taken part in any of the ceremonies called for by the secondary burial. Neither should such a person go near small children because these will, according to Guajiro belief, automatically begin to cry and twist about, the victims of some sickness.

In general terms, the individual who approaches a corpse, who touches it, or who participates directly in the different ceremonies relating to it becomes contaminated. But he does not suffer the consequences of this contamination in his own person, unless it be a pregnant woman; he takes on the role of transmitting agent. He becomes an intermediary, if we can so call him, between the spirit and children, sick people, or pregnant women, which are the three classes of people preferred by the spirits of the dead on whom to practice their malevolent contaminations. In all three cases the weakness of the contaminated person is evident: the sick person, the child in the womb unable to defend itself, and the newborn also incapable of defending itself against the spirit as it shows in contrast to the other members of the community, that is, the adults on whom it depends for its

[120 cont.]

843 There is another series of magic acts related to those recently enumerated, which also share the qualities of another individual but which differ from them in two aspects: first because they are indirect, that is, because the child receives them through his mother during the period of gestation; second because they are not so directly related with the notion of mana but could be included in what we might call phenomena of autosuggestion because they only consist of one sudden impression or a strong unsatisfied desire which causes anguish. Some of these are the following.

When a woman is pregnant and she gets a strong shock through the sudden apparition of someone, the child when born will have the same skin color as the person who has startled her.

On the other hand, if during her pregnancy, especially [845] during the early months, the mother should be greatly frightened, twins will be born to her. In this aspect regarding twins, there is also the belief that these are born when the woman has been [853] asked and has refused to give the breast to a twin child whose own mother was unable to feed it.

Finally, when during the time of her pregnancy a woman has a very strong desire to possess something, as for instance a dress, a necklace, any special or particular kind of ornament, and she searches anxiously for it but does not find it and so does not satisfy her wish, her child will be born under the influence of her unfulfilled desire and will carry on its face the dissatisfied look of its mother: He will have his mouth half open, an anxious look, and will be continually crying and upset. [121]

VIII

Magic as the Origin of the Theater in La Guajira (The Dance of the Kid)

128 It may perhaps be overbold to use the title which heads this chapter, and this may even apply to the contents and the statements which we make in it, because here some concepts will be confused which could be treated separately, such as the

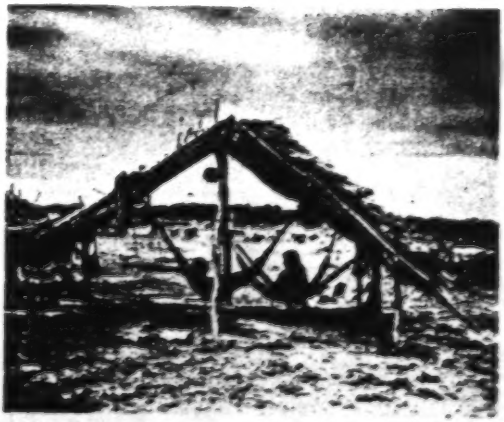
7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

516
142
291
[854
845]

By the shore. Held by father and sister, these were the only twins we ever saw. The Guajiro let twins live

Right: *Indian girls*

342
513
352 *A simple Indian hut*



[Facing p. 32]

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

How must a girl look to find favour with them? She must be tall, broad-hipped and have firm prominent breasts and well-rounded curves. Flabbiness the men do not like, but they do not seem to worry about the shape of their women's legs. These, of course, are hidden beneath the wide tunic, but the wind sweeps this against them, outlining them. It is fortunate for the Guajiro women that their men do not attach importance to the shape of their legs, for they are seldom lovely. To our eyes they seem too short and badly shaped. The men attach much importance to gentle, dignified behaviour. The Guajiro girl should have large eyes and good teeth, but the most important thing of all is that she should be light-skinned; that is the hall-mark of gentility. No girl ever neglects her beauty decoctions, not even when she is in the charge of the nuns at the mission station and thus not isolated as the rule is at home. The rules she has to observe and the medicines she must take are of importance not only for her appearance, but also for her physique. If she follows her instructions, she will give birth without difficulty and there will be no risk of the baby being still-born. Her mother and her family are held to be partially responsible if the first-born dies in or after birth, for that means that on some point the complicated rules governing the girl's period of incarceration have been neglected.

A girl is by no means idle while she is shut up; quite the contrary. She spins and weaves industriously, under supervision of the old woman, and learns the details of housekeeping and how to prepare different foods. Actually she will know most of this already, having taken a more or less active part in the work of the household ever since she was able to walk. She also receives instruction in how to behave, is initiated into the duties incumbent upon a housewife, what she must do as spouse and mother, in the various aspects of married life and in the mysteries of sex.

No man is allowed to enter the girl's little hut, and she is not allowed to meet men, receive visitors or be with her family, if visitors come. When the guardian considers that the girl can be let out, usually after a year or two—the news spreads quickly and guests start to come with or without

8;Armstrong & Métraux E-4 (no date) 1948
SC13 Goajiro SC13

minus an amount considered equivalent for the sexual right he had exercised. If a woman dies in her first childbirth the husband may demand the full return of the bride price (Simons, 1885, p. 792, however, states that the wife's relatives demand compensation from the husband). Adultery entails divorce with full return of the bride price. It rarely occurs, however, as the wife will be treated badly by her own relatives. At his death a man's wives are inherited by his brother, and next by his sister's sons; the women may avoid this by making a payment equivalent to their bride price. If he is of the Catholic faith his children may claim to be his legal heirs, which leads to conflict with the maternal nephews. (See Social Organization, p. 374.)

The influence of women in political affairs is sometimes noticeable. There are cases of female chiefs, and women are respected enough so as to be able to intervene and stop brawls.

Death.—Funerals are accompanied by festivities which last days or even weeks, according to the wealth of the family. There are some differences in the funeral ceremonies which are apparently associated with the particular sibs. These funeral feasts afford the best opportunity for display of wealth, and more than 1,000 head of livestock may be butchered. Every mourner who comes to the feast contributes animals for slaughter and continues to do so as long as he cares to remain. After the mourning period, marked by weeping and lamenting interspersed with drinking and feasting, the corpse, which has lain in a hammock slung from the rafters, is sewn up in hides by the women (men may not touch a dead body) and carried to the cemetery of the tribe. For a year or so, the body may be temporarily consigned to a shallow grave marked by a pile of stones. Food and drink are often placed in the grave, and, if the deceased had been a warrior, his bows and arrows are put in. A year or two later the bones are exhumed and reburied in a large urn. The exhumation is generally done at night and is accompanied by a feast. The remains are carried in a funeral procession to the dead person's birthplace, where they are buried in the family's own cemetery. The funeral urn is placed in a vertical position with the narrow neck of the jar protruding above ground to permit the free entry and exit of the spirit and to allow the remains of other members of the family to be added from time to time. A cactus hedge surrounds the cemetery, and in wet weather half a calabash is placed over the opening of each jar to keep out the rain. Whenever two relatives of a recently deceased person meet, they bow to the ground, shouting and groaning, for several minutes. (For a slightly different account of the burial of a rich man, see Simons, 1885, p. 792.)

If a person is stricken with smallpox the whole tribe moves away, only the family of the sick person remaining. When the death occurs they bury the body below the floor and burn the hut over the grave.